

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 11709 301510Z

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ACTION SCSE-00

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O 301450Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1222

UNCLAS MOSCOW 11709

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: CDES (ULLIN, JON GARY)

SUBJ: DEATH OF MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

REF: STATE 164682

1. JULY 30 EXPEDITION MEMBER MICHAEL YOKELL ARRIVED MOSCOW AND PHONED ULLIN'S PARENTS FROM EMBASSY. HE TOLD MR. ULLIN EXPEDITION PARTY FELT GARY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED BURIAL ON MOUNTAIN, AND THAT EXPEDITION TEAM WAS PREPARED TO ENDEAVOR TO CARRY BODY OFF MOUNTAIN IF THAT WAS FAMILY'S STRONG DESIRE, BUT DOING SO WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS. MR. ULLIN TOLD YOKELL HE WITHDREW REQUEST FOR BODY'S RETURN TO UNITED STATES, AND ASKED INSTEAD THAT BODY BE TAKEN DOWN BELOW SNOW COVER, BURIED, AND THAT GRAVE BE MARKED. YOKELL SAID THAT COULD BE DONE, AND HE WOULD SO ADVISE EXPEDITION LEADER.

2. MR. ULLIN ASKED ABOUT VISITING SITE. CONSOFF ADVISED HIM TO APPLY TO SOVEMBASSY OR SOVCONGEN FOR VISA, PROVIDING FULL INFORMATION ABOUT PURPOSE OF TRIP AND REQUESTING PERMISSION AND MEANS TO TRAVEL TO SITE.

3. FYI: YOKELL SAID SENIOR SOVIET AT BASE CAMP SAID BODY COULD NOT RPT NOT BE REMOVED WITHOUT UNDUE DANGER BECAUSE OF SNOW AND ICE CONDITIONS. SOVIET HELICOPTER MADE PASS OVER SITE OF DEATH AND DROPPED EQUIPMENT TO SNOWSLIDE SURVIVORS, BUT IT CANNOT LAND THERE NOR HOVER AT 16,700 FOOT ALTITUDE, AND BODY COULD NOT BE RECOVERED BY HELICOPTER. END FYI.

4. YOKELL TOLD CONSOFF THAT SERIES OF SNOWSLIDES WERE CAUSED BY MINOR EARTHQUAKE. ULLIN AND THREE OTHER AMERICANS--ROBERT UNCLASSIFIED

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CRAIG, JOHN MARTS AND JOHN ROSKELLEY--WERE IN TENTS ON NORTH FACE

OF PEAK OF 19TH PARTY CONGRESS WHEN SLIDE COVERED TENT IN WHICH ULLIN WAS SLEEPING. OTHERS DUG HIM OUT, BUT AMERICAN PARAMEDIC COULD NOT REVIVE HIM. GROUP BELIEVES HE WAS KILLED BY IMPACT AND NOT SMOTHERED.

5. YOKELL SUFFERED LEG INJURY IN DIFFERENT SNOWSLIDE, AND IS EN ROUTE BACK TO UNITED STATES. STOESEL

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